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ABSTRACT

This report emphasizes the rationale for and procedures of a high school graduate follow-up telephone survey in Hampton, Virginia, conducted on classes of even-numbered years. The survey instrument and charts of results from 1982-86 comprise over three-fourths of the document. The follow-up survey was initiated to gather information for a school district program evaluation system. The survey occurs during Christmas holidays, drawing former students from random samples. Data use is categorized by location of students, program quality checks, trend data, and public relations. Trained callers ask questions which will elicit information to be used for longitudinal analysis and for application to currently evaluated programs, including the state competency program. In 1984, respondents were asked to "grade" aspects of school programs from "A" to "F," instead of using previous responses of "excellent," "average," and "poor"; as a result, data collection was improved. Telephone survey offers the opportunity to clarify data and to include an open response section about suggested school improvements. Student background information, already contained in school data processing records, is not needed. Callers code data according to the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Two-year comparison data are used frequently for program planning. Changes are not now anticipated, other than to expand the survey to follow up students from previous surveys. (CJH)

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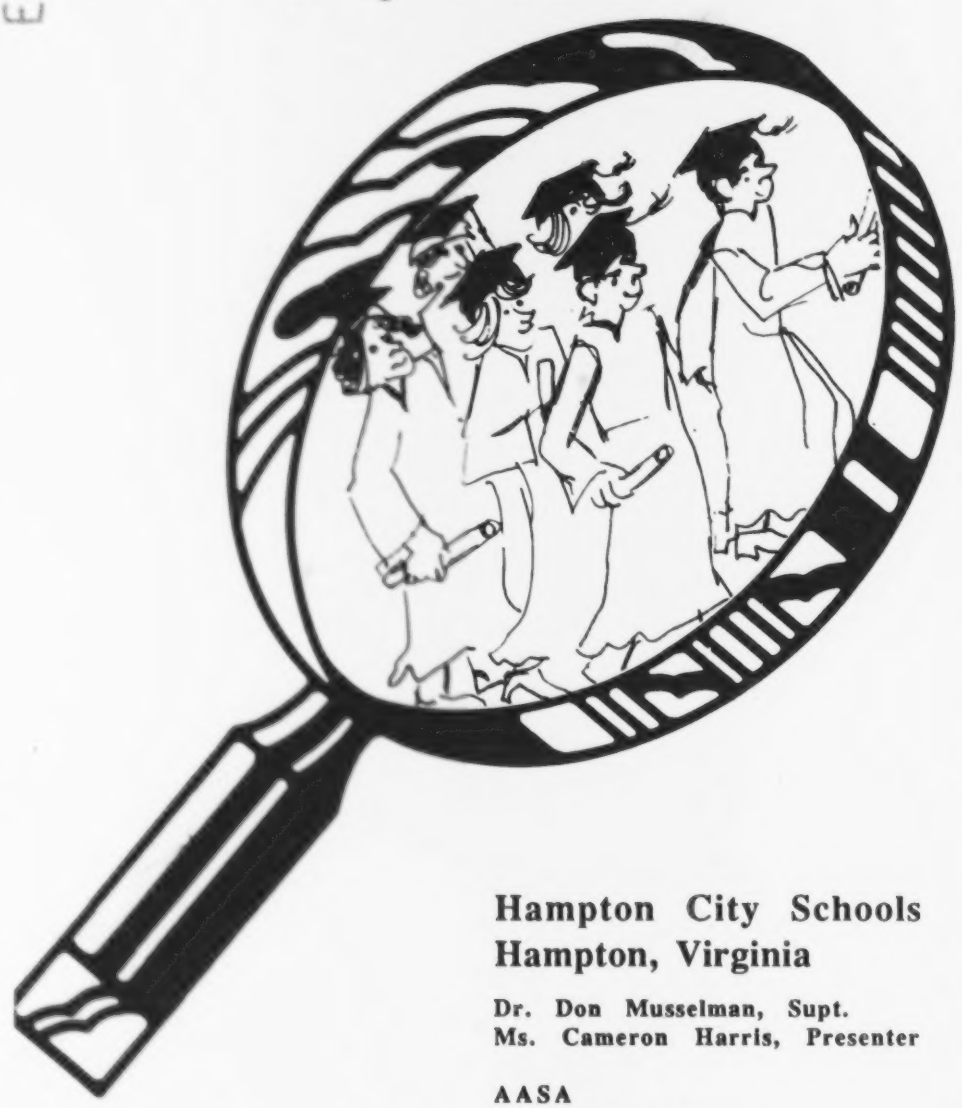
Graduate Follow-up Studies.. Why Bother?



Hampton City Schools
Hampton, Virginia

Dr. Don Musselman, Supt.
Ms. Cameron Harris, Presenter

AASA
February, 1987

EA 019 279

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RATIONALE FOR SURVEY

As soon as graduation is completed in June the products of the schools system enter the "real world". We have developed instructional programs to help them prepare for their chosen field and have maneuvered them through the maze of courses, competencies and content. Their degree of preparation for further education or the world of work is an important gauge by which we may measure our success. They are our products, fresh off the "assembly-line."

Hampton has conducted a Senior Survey for many years. This survey asks questions related to what students intend to do and is administered prior to the close of the senior year. This has given us a bit of information as to what students are intending to do after graduation but does not give any information as to what students really do pursue after graduation. For that reason the Graduate Follow-Up Survey program was initiated.

As the school division developed a comprehensive program evaluation cycle whereby all programs are subject to a thorough evaluation at fixed intervals, the need for perception information as to program quality emerged. Rather than do a separate survey to tap this information, the Graduate Follow-Up Survey was modified to provide this information to departments and the Office of Program Evaluation.

Participation is a key element in the planning and implementation of school programs. The Graduate Follow-Up Survey gives our graduates an opportunity to give us feedback as to how well we did and to suggest ways to improve programs. The survey is another way we can involve our public in the effective provision of education.

PROCEDURES

TIMING

Once students leave the school system, their whereabouts is always difficult to ascertain. The current format of the Graduate Follow-Up Survey is to survey students in even numbered classes, ie., Class of 1984, Class of 1986, Class of 1988, etc., during the Christmas holidays immediately following their graduation. This procedure has been used for all surveys conducted to date.

The stumbling block to conducting this survey or any other, is finding the students. The Christmas holidays were chosen because of the "homing instinct" most of us have at that time of year. Students at college are home on break, those in the military are home on leave, those working are available due to vacation, and, generally speaking, people can be found at this time of the year. Mom knows where they are if they are not in the living room.

In Hampton and perhaps in other areas, there are several colleges that a large number of our graduates attend. The holiday breaks of these institution are often the signal to begin the survey. As these institutions close for the break we man the phones.

We have found that it is of little benefit to begin to survey students by telephone before 10:00 am. They are asleep and parents are reluctant to awaken them. While this also coincides with the time the malls open which often necessitates a call-back, that timing appears to be the best for us. We schedule callers for evening hours and week-ends. Students working are the most difficult to get, but persistence, as well as a good record of suggested call-back times, pays off.

HOW WE SURVEY

When we first began to plan the Graduate Follow-Up Survey we weighed the options of telephone vs mail surveys. We had conducted a number of mail surveys, complete with self-addressed stamped envelopes, but the return was poor. This experience made us look seriously at the idea of a telephone survey and we have not regretted it.

A telephone survey is only as good as the telephone numbers you have for students. Fortunately for us, our data processing system has the capacity to provide us with a good listing of students, addresses and phone numbers. We checked to see how many students would be eliminated if we went the phone route. This was less than 2% of the population. We still have to deal with disconnected phones and changed numbers but to date, this had not been detrimental to our survey.

A random sample is drawn from the graduates with phone numbers. The sample is deliberately overdrawn to give enough potential respondents to make up for moved students and disconnected phones. The advantage of a telephone survey is clear here. We can call former students in the sample until we reach our target number. The uncertainty of returns characteristic of mail surveys is not a factor. The sample size for each survey is determined by using a sample size table like those found in many statistics books.

The decision to use a telephone survey is a labor intensive one. Rather than depending on the postal service to deliver the survey it is the callers. This puts the training of these people as a top priority in the process. In our first survey we used secretarial staff. In subsequent surveys we have supplemented this with Cooperative Office Education students and have been very satisfied. Each caller participating in the survey is required to completed a training phase where the survey itself is reviewed and a sample calling format distributed. Callers are required to rehearse with potential problem respondents so they can develop appropriate responses to keep the survey on cue.

In using students the only caveat we have had is that they may not call students graduated from their own high school. The potential for familiarity to taint reponses is too great. While this has been a necessity it has caused us no problems. In fact, the use of students was greatest in our 1986 survey and it was completed in record time.

Experience has taught us that it is extremely important to keep accurate, legible records of busy signals, preferred call-back times and dead-end calls. This prevents such things as calling the same person twice, missed calls, and wrong numbers, but more importantly, it allows callers to pick up each other's list and know what is what and begin immediately.

WHAT DO YOU ASK?

The central issue in any survey is what to ask. In the Graduate Follow-Up Survey there are specific sets of information we are seeking. We want to know what students are doing after graduation, where they are and how they feel about certain programs. The decision as to what program satisfaction items to include is based upon the need for longitudinal information and the specific programs currently under evaluation or anticipated for evaluation.

Our first survey was at a time when there was considerable controversary over the teaching of grammar in the division and the entire program participating in a program evaluation. The inclusion of specific questions related to grammar and writing were especially important to the program evaluation effort and were included in the survey as opposed to a question on the English program in general. To keep a longitudinal look at that satisfaction, we have kept those two questions on all subsequent surveys. Specific content area questions for core subjects are on the survey as well as general satisfaction questions related to the total high school program and teachers.

The State of Virginia operates a graduation competency program which requires that students demonstrate proficiency in reading, math and citizenship as well as be certified as having a job skill or

sufficient course work to enable further education. A question has been contained on the survey related to this last competency.

SAT scores have received attention within Hampton as in the rest of the nation. We ask students if they took the SAT. When students are in high school they can generally pursue courses preparing them to enter college or other training or they can pursue a job skill. We ask students which type of high school program they followed.

The phrasing of the questions has been evolutionary with us. Our 1982 survey used responses of "excellent", "average" and "poor". This appears to be a simple set of choices but our respondents had a great deal of difficulty dealing with them. They were not clear and perhaps too few in number. An adjustment was made in 1984 and used again in 1986 to ask the respondents to "grade" aspects of the school program using the same grading scale by which they had been graded in school. Choices are now "A", "B", "C", "D", and "F". This has been a vast improvement. Respondents understand this scale. The concept of reciprocal grades has been well received. We do have the problem of relating 1982 data to that of 1984 and 1986. Another change in scale will be made only when absolutely necessary.

A telephone survey offers the opportunity for the caller to further clarify a question if there appears to be confusion but is also requires that the survey not be too long. Respondents will not remain on the phone much over five minutes. This does influence the number and complexity of questions asked. However, the telephone method does offer that opportunity to clarify, absent in the mail survey. This clarification is essential to uniform responses and is directly related to the degree and quality of training afforded the callers.

A free response section is included in our survey so that respondents may give us their suggestions about the school system. Knowing that this could be a lengthy section, we ask that the repondent think about the ONE thing that they would like to change about the school system now that they have graduated. This forces the respondent to organize his/her thoughts and, hopefully, focus on a critical area. Respondents have liked that section and frequently express appreciation at having the opportuntity for input.

We do not have to ask identification questions because student race, sex, etc., is contained in our data processing records and provided to us. This may not be the case in other division and would necessitate the asking of that information. Putting that in later saves time on the phone. All responses are kept confidential and not linked to specific respondents in the reports.

COMPILING THE RESULTS

Not only are the callers trained in the procedures to conduct the survey, they are also trained to code in the information on coding sheets sent to our data processing center for entry. We use the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) to manipulate the data to provide overall tallies of the responses as well as a school by school report. The responses to the open-ended question are compiled and aggregated and provided as an appendix to the total report.

Comparison is possible to the extent the scales remain the same or similar. Our scale in 1982 was different from that used in 1984 and 1986, therefore negating many three-year comparisons. We do compile a two-year comparison, 1984 and 1986 and provide that information for the entire division as well as each high school. This comparison data appears to be most useful to use and may indicate trends within the division that bear attention.

Reports provide visual representations as well as tables of results.

NOW, WHAT ARE WE DOING WITH IT?

The results of any survey that represents the responses of a sample rather than the total population is subject to the accepted rules of generalizability. The extent to which the sample is a good one is the extent to which results can be seen as representing the whole. Since the telephone survey assures a good sample size, and the sample pool is random, the generalizability of the survey is high.

Use of the data tends to fall into the following categories:

1. LOCATION OF STUDENTS: The survey gives the division an opportunity to find students and ascertain their post-graduate activity. This is important in long-range program planning and the provision of relevent course offering.

2. PROGRAM QUALITY CHECKS: While we can look at various quantitative aspects of program quality there are valid needs to look at qualitative aspects. The survey asks the post-graduates to give us this rating. Perceptions of preparation are important. Patterns of suggestions for improvement or commendations are very significant.

3. TREND DATA: Longitudinal information is critical in planning. Trends in students pursuits, relationship of high school program to post-graduate activities and changes in satisfaction are inputs to a thorough long-range plan for a school division.

4. PUBLIC RELATIONS: Everyone likes to be asked their opinion. Giving your opinion makes you feel a part of the action. The meaningful involvement of non-students in the operation of a school division is becoming a top priority. This survey provides another tool for this involvement while at the same time satisfying institutions needs.

FUTURE PLANS

At this time there is no anticipated change in the two-year cycle for the survey. There are plans to expand it to follow up students from previous surveys and see if they respond differently now that more time has elapsed since their high school experience. The challenge of finding these students increases as time elapses and we will initially use a mail request to get addresses and phone numbers. If most are still in the area we will use a telephone survey. If many have moved we will combine telephone with mail or use mail exclusively dependent upon their locations.

If we are unable to get a good return on the request for addresses we will turn to the Class Reunion process and seek information there. In any event we will continue to involve our graduates as much as possible in helping us make the education for students in the City of Hampton even better.

1. What is your present activity?

	Division-86	Division-84
2- yr college	06.5	12.6
4- yr college	41.6	44.1
technical school	04.8	10.4
working full time	13.9	10.4
working part-time	07.4	10.8
working & college	16.9	
military service	04.8	
other	04.3	11.7

2. How many years did you attend the high school from which you graduated?

	Division-86	Division-84
1 year	03.0	04.1
2 years	08.2	03.2
3 years	84.8	45.9
4 years	03.9	46.8

3. Were your plans during high school directed toward going on to further education or into the world of work?

	Division-86	Division-84
Further education	81.1	62.2
World of work	19.5	30.2

4. Did you take the SAT?

	Division-86	Division-84
Yes	73.6	65.3
No	26.4	34.7

5. What grade would you give discipline in your high school?

	Division-86	Division-84
A	10.8	11.3
B	53.7	44.1
C	33.3	40.1
D	01.7	04.1
F	00.4	00.0

6. What grade would you give your high school program in giving you a background in grammar?

	Division-86	Division-84
A	22.2	18.0
B	40.7	41.4
C	26.8	28.4
D	07.8	09.5
F	02.2	01.4

7. How would you grade your high school program in preparing you to write either compositions for college or things on your job?

	Division-86	Division-84
A	37.7	36.9
B	35.1	31.1
C	22.1	25.7
D	03.5	05.4
F	01.3	00.5

8. Grade your high school program in preparing you to do mathematical calculations.

	Divison-86	Division-84
A	28.6	32.4
B	42.0	32.0
C	26.0	26.1
D	03.0	07.7
F	00.4	01.4

9. Grade your high school program in giving you a background in science.

	Division-86	Division-84
A	22.1	15.8
B	42.2	40.1
C	30.3	36.9
D	03.5	05.4
F	00.9	00.5

10. Grade your high school program in giving you a background in social studies.

	Division-86	Division-84
A	29.9	33.3
B	46.3	45.5
C	20.8	18.0
D	02.6	03.2
F	00.4	00.0

11. Grade your high school program in giving you a background in reading.

	Division-86	Division-84
A	37.2	36.9
B	40.7	33.8
C	19.0	24.8
D	03.0	02.7
F	00.0	00.0

12. If you were asked to grade your high school program overall in preparing you for what you are now doing, what grade would you give it?

	Division-86	Division-84
A	18.6	14.9
B	57.6	56.8
C	20.8	23.4
D	01.7	04.1
F	00.9	00.5

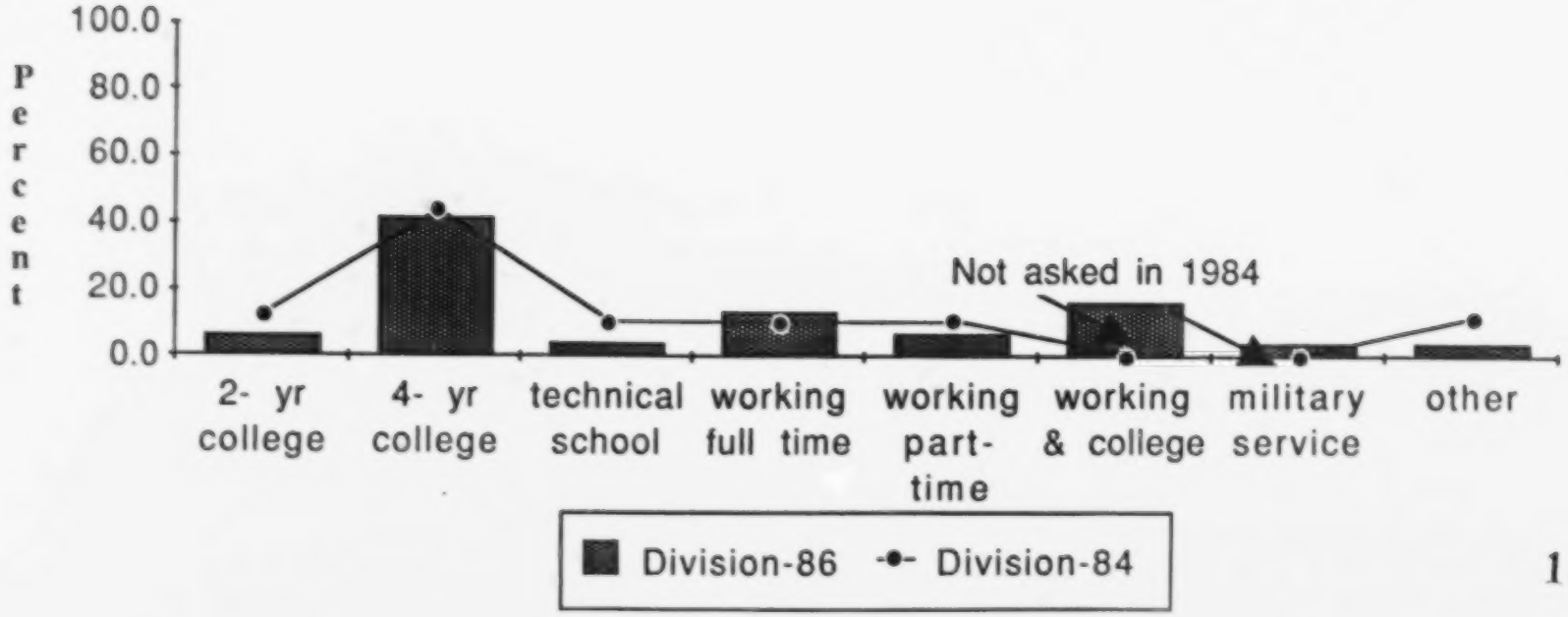
13. Grade your teachers in your high school in their ability to meet your needs.

	Division-86	Division-84
A	26.4	18.9
B	48.9	56.8
C	22.9	23.9
D	00.9	00.5
F	00.9	00.0

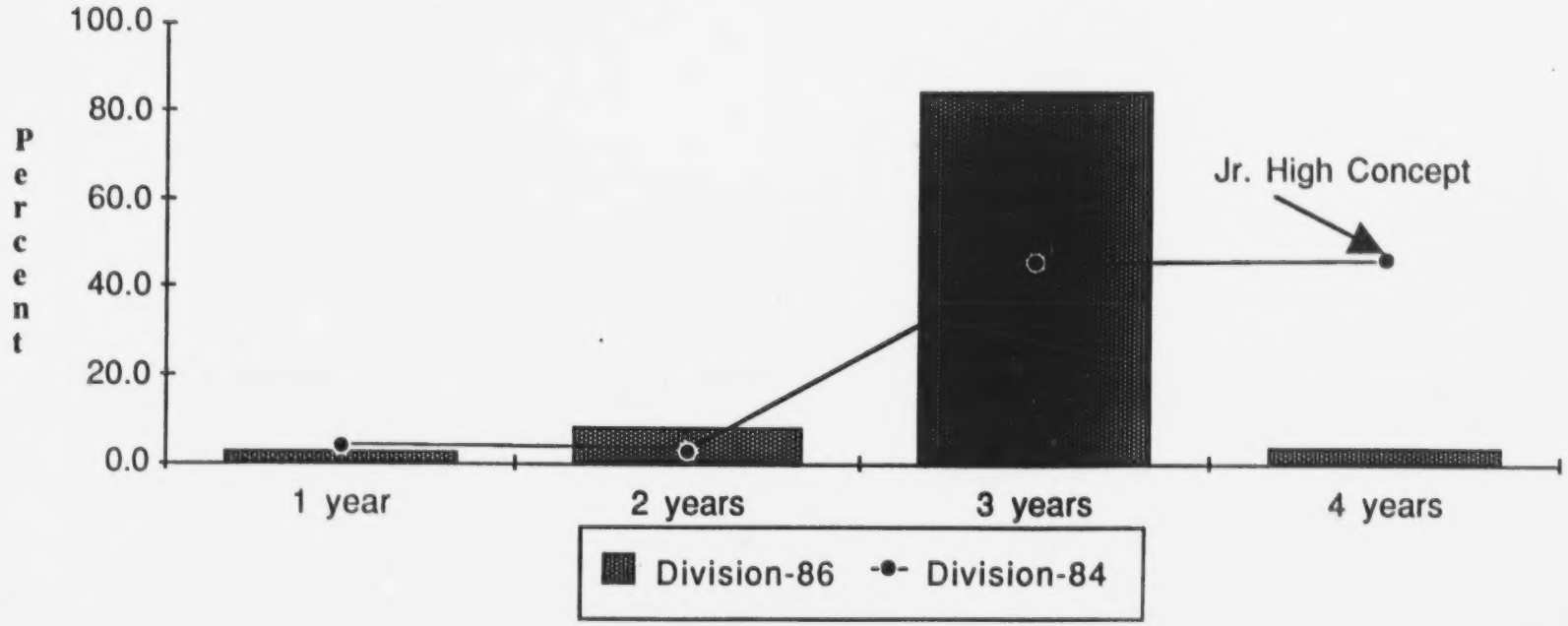
14. Grade the counseling program in your high school.

	Division-86	Division-84
A	21.6	21.6
B	27.7	22.1
C	35.5	33.3
D	11.3	18.5
F	03.9	04.5

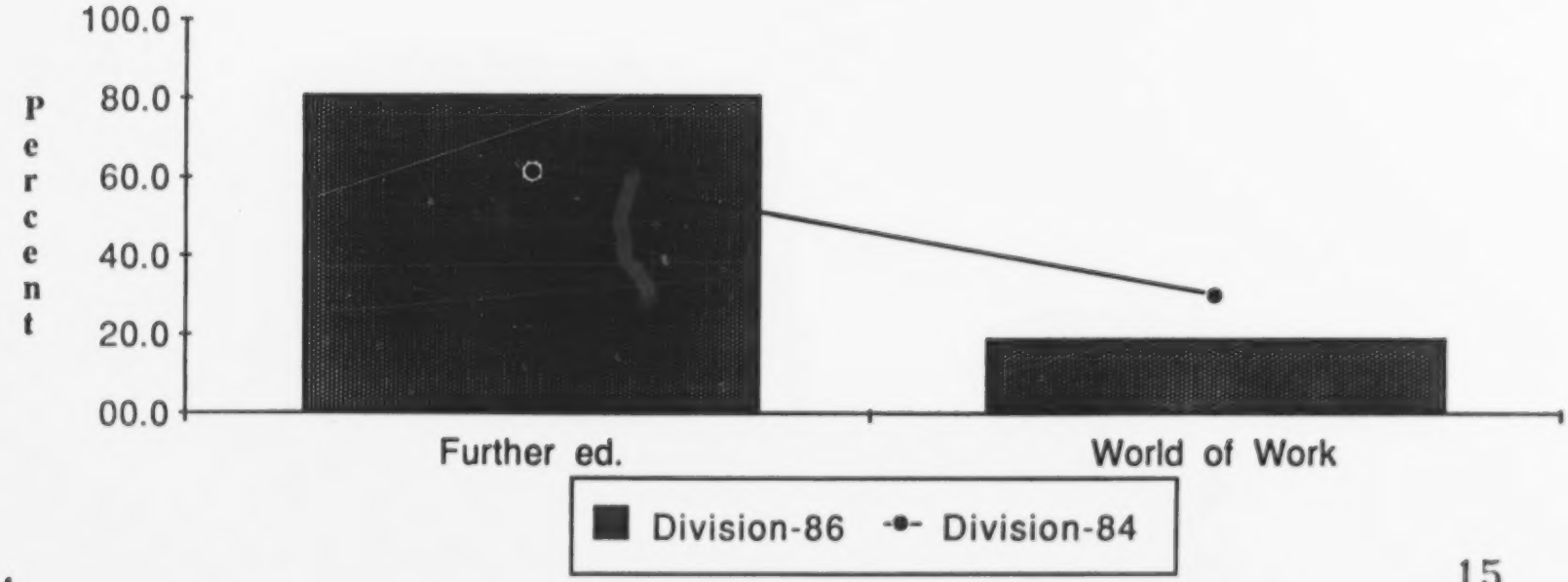
Hampton City Schools
Graduate Follow-Up Survey
Class of 1986 & Class of 1984
Post Graduate Activities



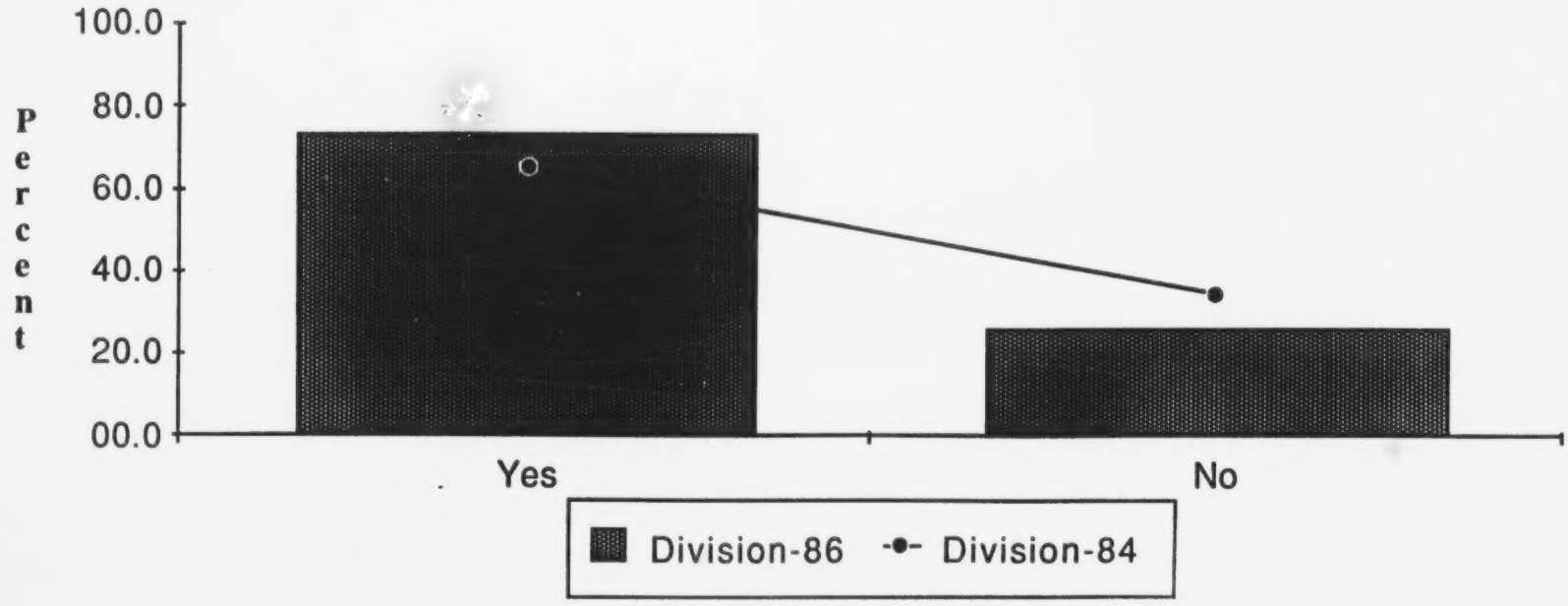
Hampton City Schools
Graduate Follow-Up Survey
Class of 1986 & Class of 1984
Years Attending High School of Graduation



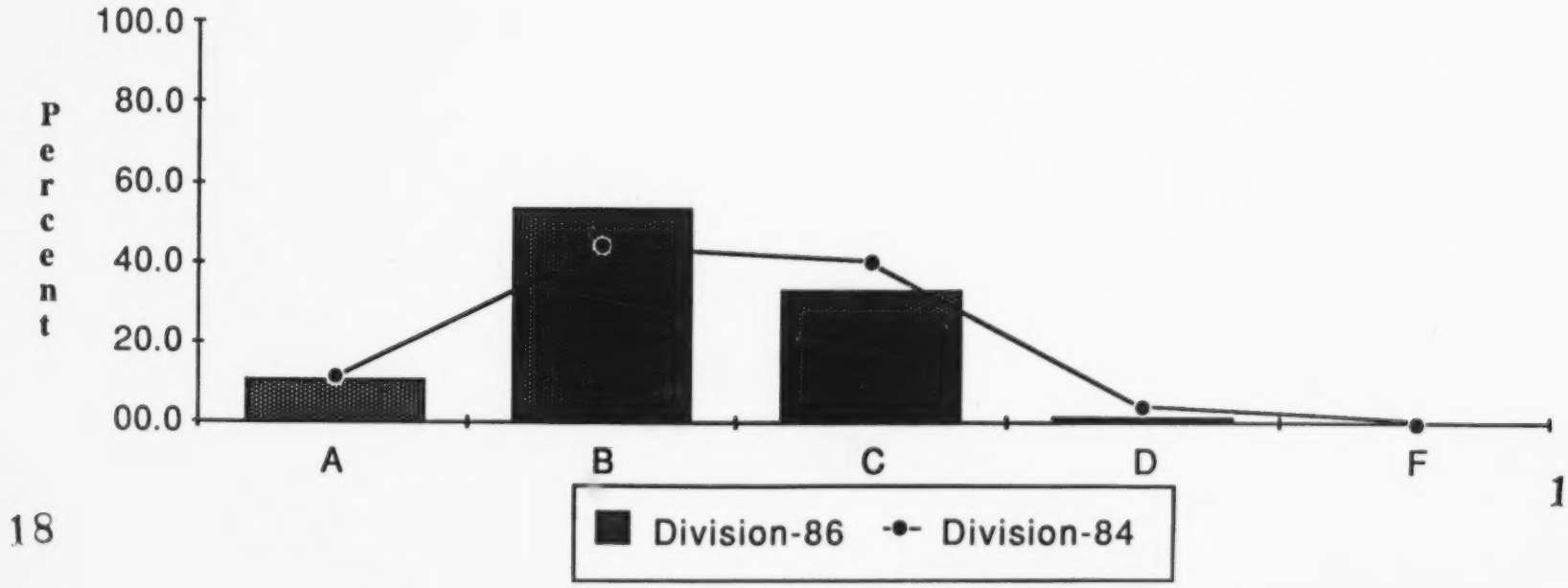
Hampton City Schools
Graduate Follow-Up Survey
Class of 1986 & Class of 1984
Direction of High School Preparation



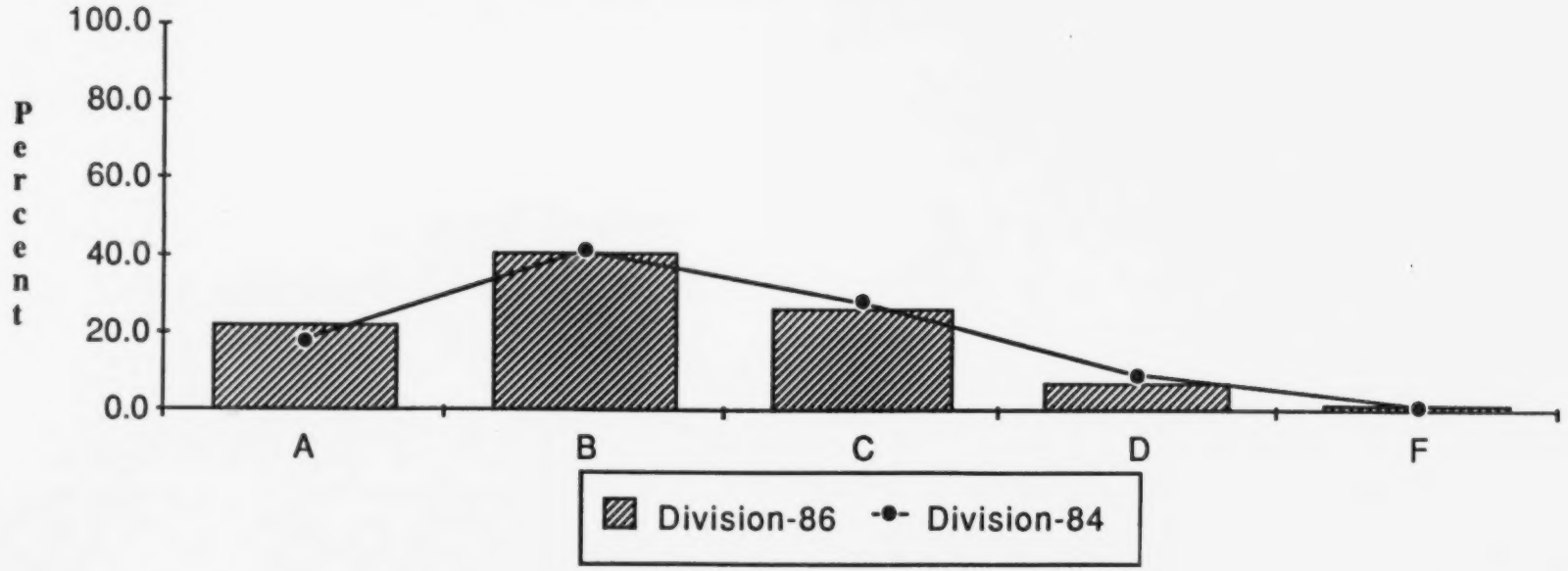
Hampton City Schools
Graduate Follow-Up Survey
Class of 1986 & Class of 1984
Students Taking SAT



Hampton City Schools
Graduate Follow-Up Survey
Class of 1986 & Class of 1984
Grade Given Discipline in Their High School



Hampton City Schools
Graduate Follow-Up Survey
Class of 1986 & Class of 1984
Grade Given Background in Grammar



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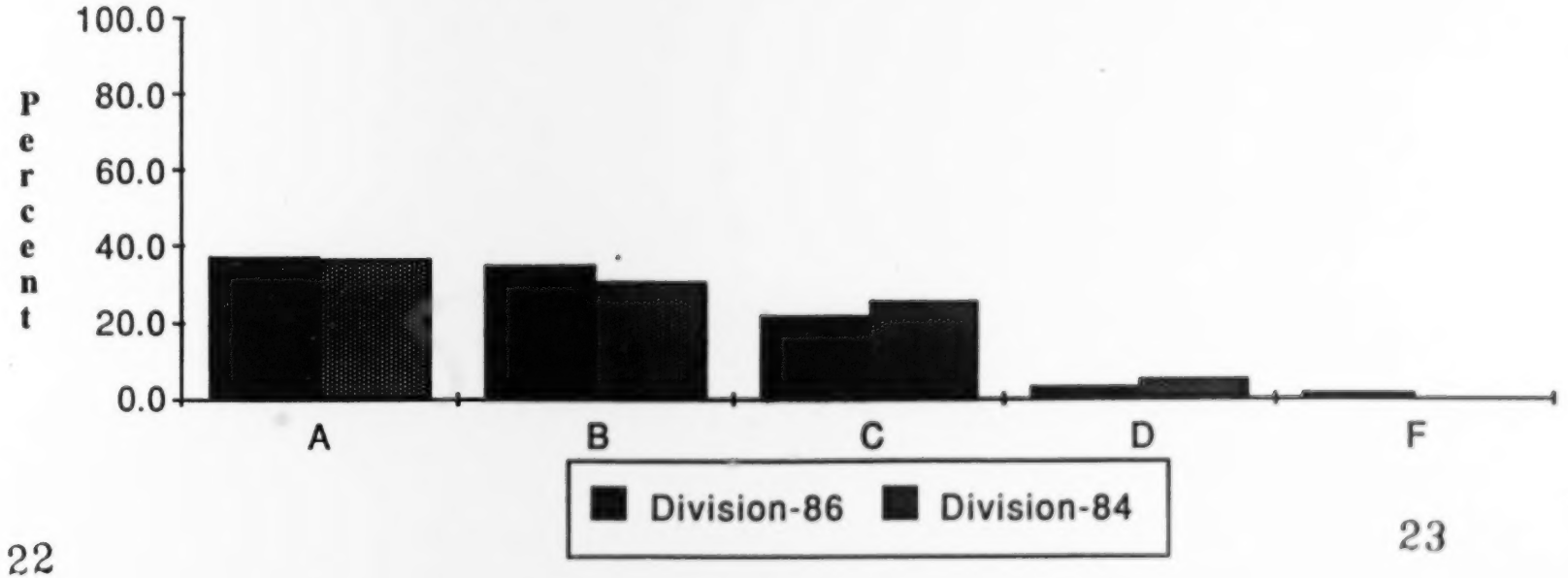
Graduate Follow-Up Survey
Class of 1986 & Class of 1984
Grade Given Writing Preparation



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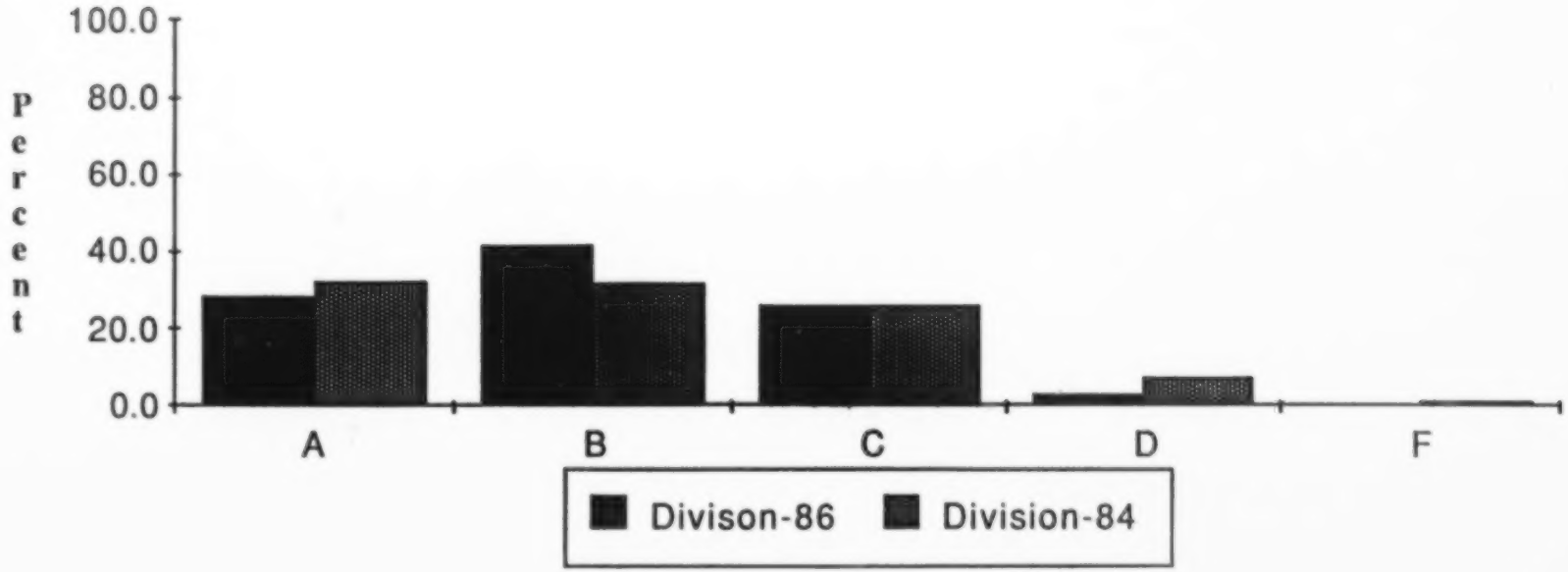
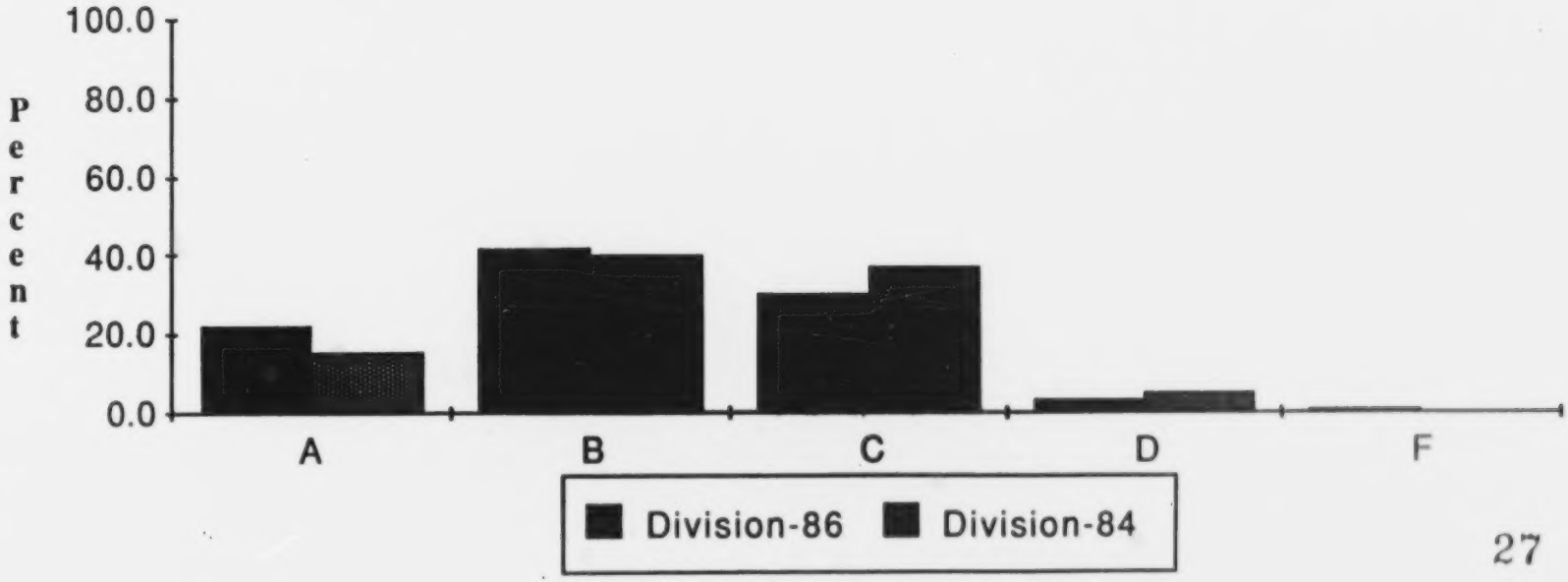
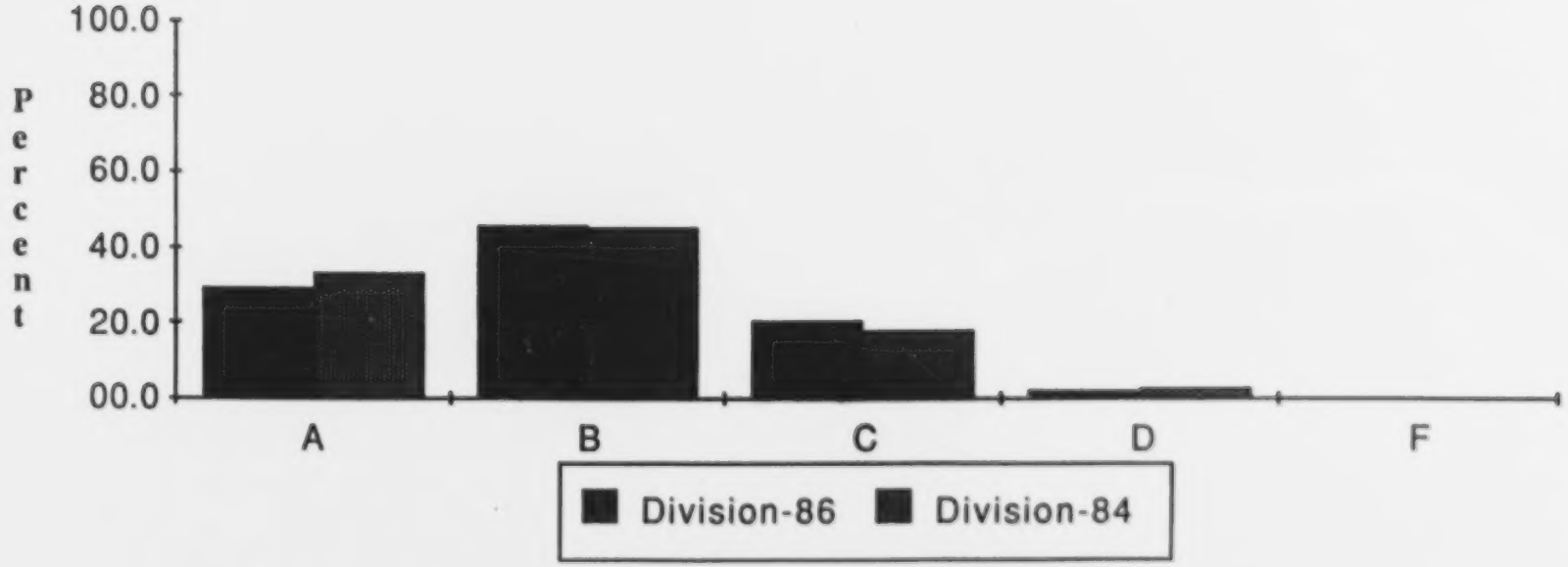
Graduate Follow-Up Survey
Class of 1986 & Class of 1984
Grade Given Background in Math



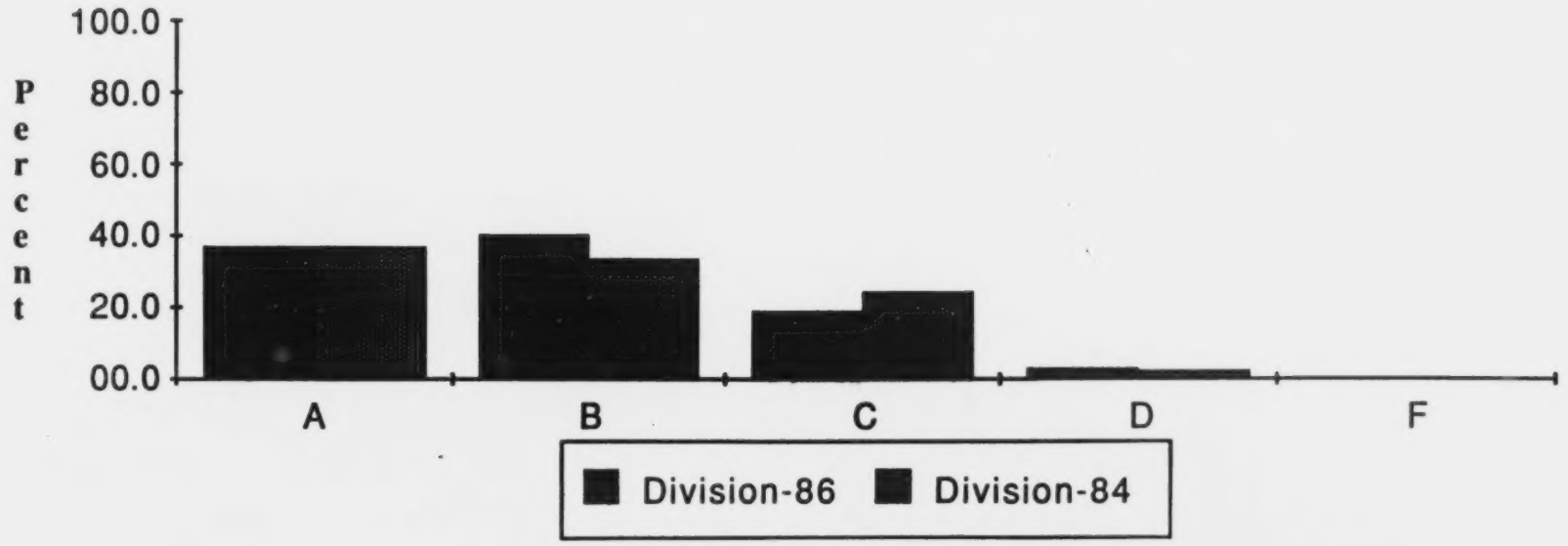
Hampton City Schools
Graduate Follow-Up Survey
Class of 1986 & Class of 1984
Grade Given Science Background



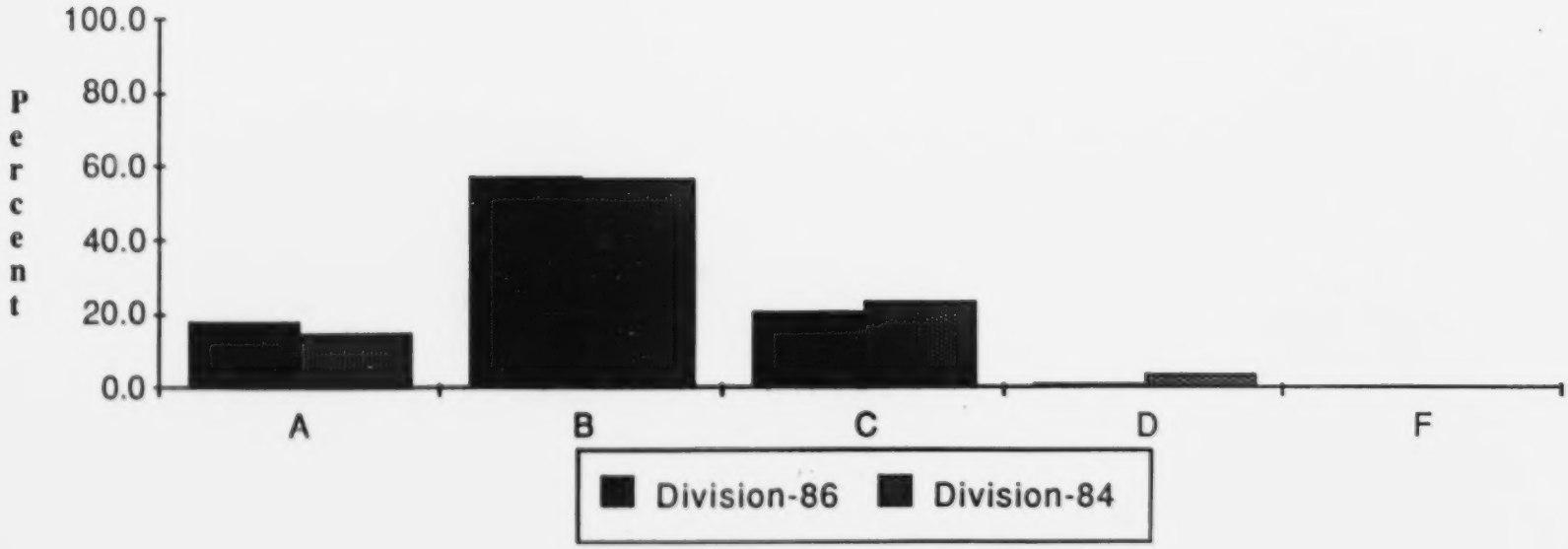
Hampton City Schools
Graduate Follow-Up Survey
Class of 1986 & Class of 1984
Grade Given Background in Social Studies



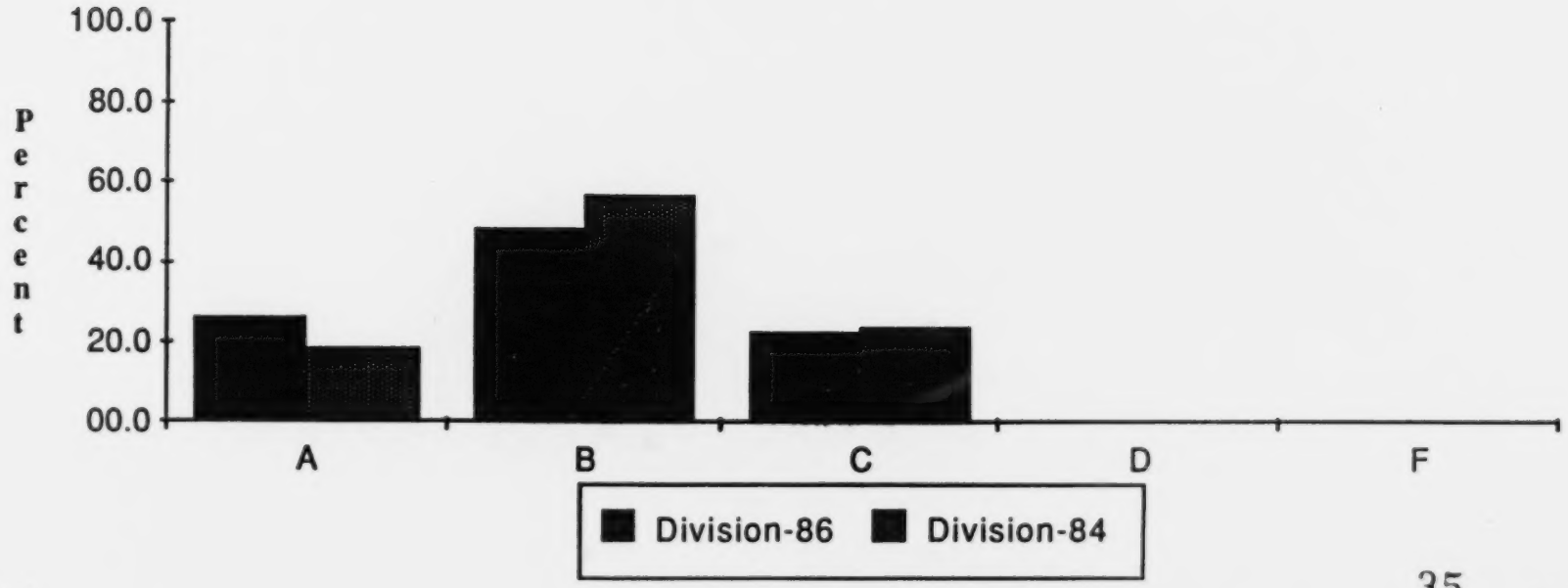
Hampton City Schools
Graduate Follow-Up Survey
Class of 1986 & Class of 1984
Grade Given Reading Background



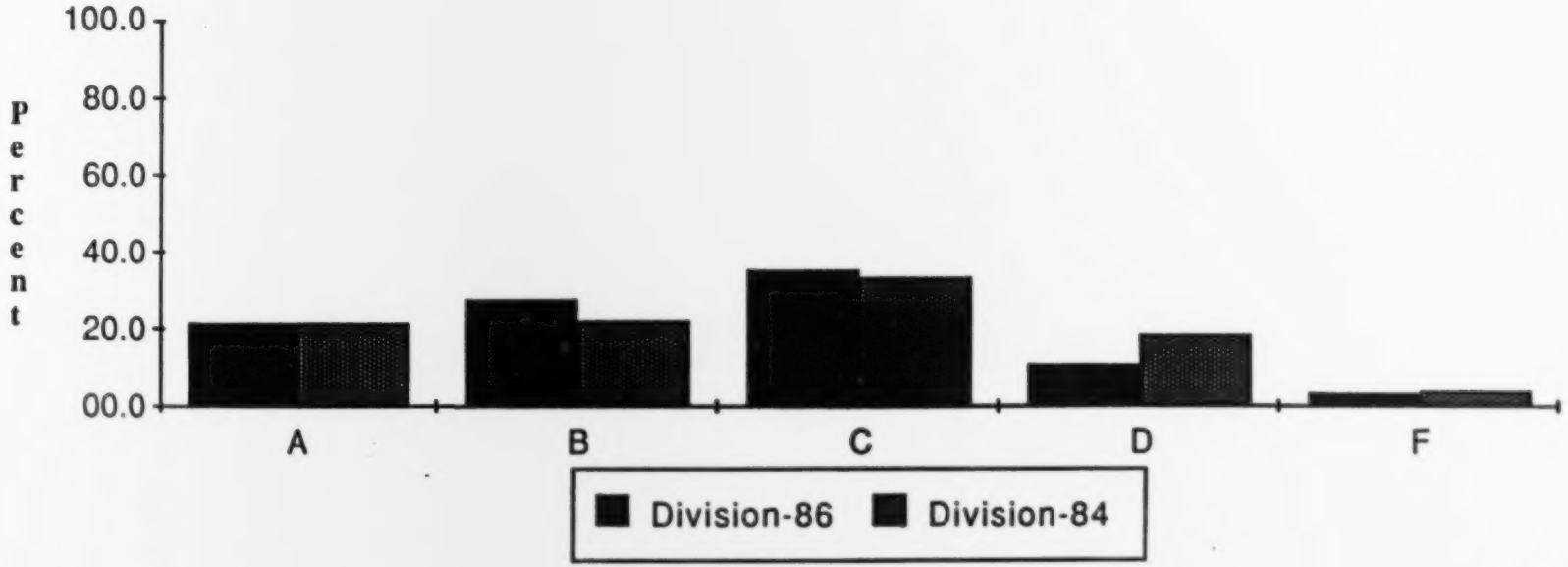
Hampton City Schools
Graduate Follow-Up Survey
Class of 1986 & Class of 1984
Grade Given Preparation by Overall High School Program



Hampton City Schools
Graduate Follow-Up Survey
Class of 1986 & Class of 1984
Grade Given Teachers in Their High School Overall



Hampton City Schools
Graduate Follow-Up Survey
Class of 1986 & Class of 1984
Grade Given Counseling Program in High School



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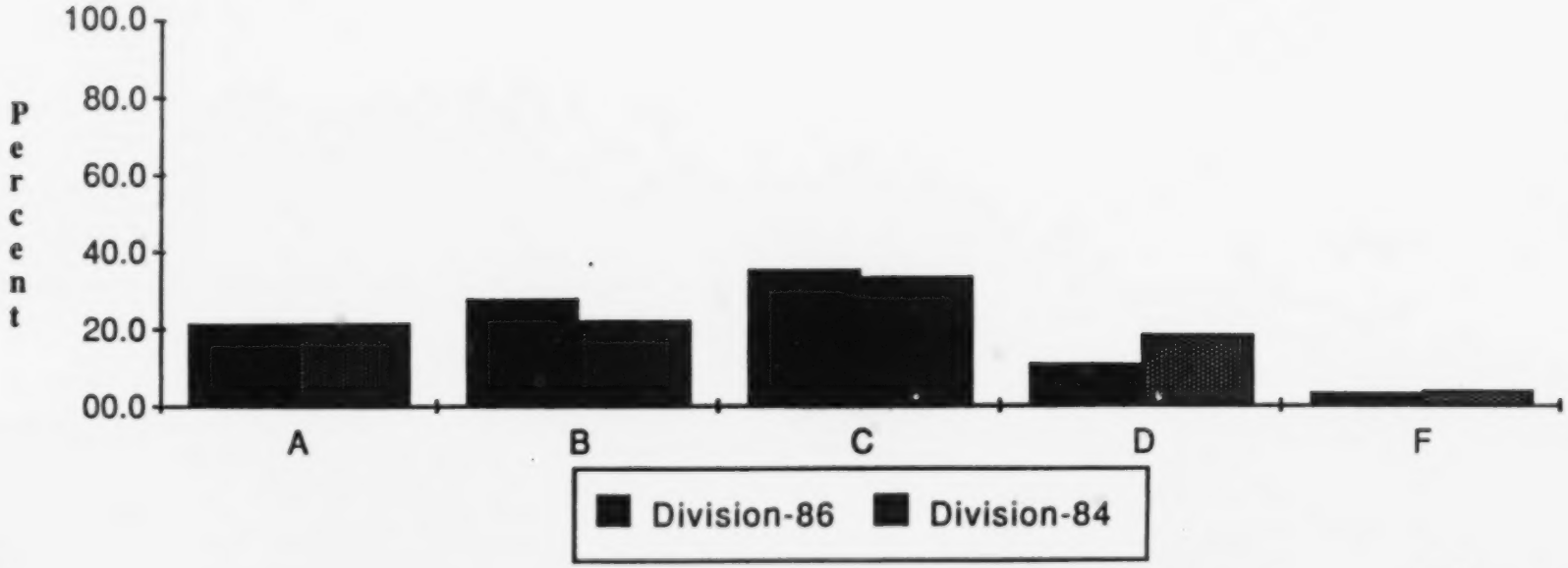
Graduate Follow-Up Survey
Class of 1986 & Class of 1984
Grade Given Counseling Program in High School



GRADUATE FOLLOW-UP SURVEY
DECEMBER 1982

STUDENT NAME:_____STUDENT NUMBER:_____

---

1. What is your present activity?

   1. 2 year college
   2. 4 year college
   3. technical school
   4. working
   5. other

2. How many years did you attend high school in Hampton?

   1 2 3 4

3. When you were in high school what track or type of courses did you take?

   1. College prep 2. General 3. Vocational

4. Did you take the SAT? 1. Yes 2. No

5. What was the highest math course you took? In what year did you take this course?

   1. General math
   2. Alegrba I
   3. Algebra II
   4. Geometry
   5. Trigonometry
   6. Calculus

   ---

   1. 9TH
   2. 10TH
   3. 11TH
   4. 12TH

6. Now that you are out of high school and working or going to college, how would you rate your high school program in the following?

A. WRITING	1. EXCELLENT	2. AVERAGE	3. POOR
B. SPEAKING	1. EXCELLENT	2. AVERAGE	3. POOR
C. READING	1. EXCELLENT	2. AVERAGE	3. POOR
D. MATHEMATICS	1. EXCELLENT	2. AVERAGE	3. POOR
E. COUNSELING	1. EXCELLENT	2. AVERAGE	3. POOR

7. Think of the teachers you had as you went through school, in general, how would you rate their having met your needs and the needs of your classmates?

   1. EXCELLENT 2. AVERAGE 3. POOR

8. Rate your high school as to its overal preparation of you to pursue your present life activities?

   1. EXCELLENT 2. AVERAGE 3. POOR

9. Name one thing you would like to change about the Hampton School System that would make it more responsive to the needs of its students.

SCHOOL:_____ SAT-V:_____SAT-M:_____SPA OVERALL:_____

MIN.COMP-R:_____MIN.COMP-M:_____ CLASS RANK:_____

SRA(11) R-%ILE:_____ SRA(11) M-%ILE:_____SRA(11) L-%ILE:_____

GRADUATE FOLLOW-UP SURVEY
DECEMBER 1984

STUDENT NAME:_____
(LAST) (FIRST)

TELEPHONE:_____STUDENT NUMBER:_____

ETHNIC CODE:_____ SEX:_____ SCHOOL:_____

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1. What is your present activity?

   1.. 2 year college
   2. 4 year college
   3. technical school
   4. working full time
   5. working part time
   6. other

2. How many years did you attend the high school from which you graduated?

   1 year 2 Years 3 Years 4 Years

3. How did you satisfy the fourth competency in order to graduate?

   1. Further education 2. World of Work

4. Did you take the SAT? 1. Yes 2. No

Throughout your school career you have been given grades for your performance. Now that you have graduated from the Hampton City Schools and gone on to a job or further education, it is your turn to give grades to the Hampton City Schools. Think back over the experiences you had in high school and grade your school system on the folllowing items:

1. What grade would you give discipline in your high school?

   A. B. C. D. F.

2. What grade would you give your high school program in giving you a background in grammar?

   A. B. C. D. F.

3. How would you grade your high school program in preparing you to write either compositions for college or things on the job??

   A. B. C. D. F.

4. How would you grade your high school program in preparing you to do mathematical calculations?

   A. B. C. D. F.

5. Grade your high school program in giving you a background in science.

   A. B. C. D. F.

6. Grade your high school program in giving you a background in social studies.

   A. B. C. D. F.

-over-

7. Grade your high school program in giving you a background in reading.

A. B. C. D. F.

8. If you were asked to grade your high school program overall in preparing you for what you are doing now, what grade would you give it?

A. B. C. D. F.

9. Grade your teachers in your high school overall in their ability to meet your needs as a student.

A. B. C. D. F.

10. Grade the counseling progam in your high school.

A. B. C. D. F.

11. Now that you have been out of high school for a while, if you could change one thing about the school system what would it be?

GRADUATE FOLLOW-UP SURVEY
DECEMBER 1986

STUDENT
NAME:_____
(LAST) (FIRST)
TELEPHONE:_____STUDENT
NUMBER:_____

ETHNIC CODE:_____ SEX:_____ SCHOOL:_____

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   1. 2 year college
   2. 4 year college
   3. technical school
   4. working full time
   5. working part time
   6. other

2. How many years did you attend the high school from which you graduated?

   1 year 2 Years 3 Years 4 Years

3. Were your plans during high school directed toward going on to further education (college, business school, etc.) or into the world of work?

   1. Further education 2. World of Work

4. Did you take the SAT? 1. Yes 2. No

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-over-

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A. B. C. D. F.

10. Grade the counseling progam in your high school.

A. B. C. D. F.

11. Now that you have been out of high school for a while, if you could change one thing about the school system what would it be?

12. Would you be willing to complete a mail survey related to vocational education at a later time?

1. Yes 2. No

*****IF YES, VERIFY
ADDRESS:_____